

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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AMEMBASSY LONDON
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C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 03164

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, MORG, UN, IS, LE
SUBJECT: UNIFIL REQUIREMENT FOR PREFABS

REF: JERUSALEM 2189

1. WE HAVE DISCUSSED STATUS OF UNIFIL REQUEST FOR PURCHASE AND ASSEMBLY OF PREFABS IN NAQOURA WITH UN SECRETARIAT FIELD OPERATIONS STAFF (LANSKY), UN BUDGET DIVISION (ISSAEVITCH), AND US MEMBER ACABQ (HOUSEHOLDER).
 2. ACCORDING TO LANSKY, UNFIL HAS REQUESTED 35-40 PREFABS AND HAS EXPLORED POSSIBILITY OF PURCHASING PREFABS FROM LEBANON, CYPRUS AND ISRAEL. ONLY LAST OF THESE HAS THE REQUIRED PREFABS AS WELL AS THE EQUIPMENT AND MANPOWER TO PUT THEM UP. NO ONE IN LEBANON CAN DO THE JOB AND PURCHASE FROM CYPRUS WOULD HAVE ADDED DISADVANTAGES OF HIGHER COST AS WELL AS LONGER DELAY GIVEN TRANSIT PROBLEMS.
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3. SECRETARIAT CABLED UNIFIL AUGUST 7 ASKING FOR CURRENT ESTIMATE OF UNUSED FUNDS AND IS PREPARED TO PURCHASE UP TO ONE-THIRD OF THE TOTAL REQUIREMENT. ISSAEVITCH AND HOUSEHOLDER AGREE THAT THERE IS NO IMPEDIMENT, EITHER IN ACABQ PROCEEDINGS AND REPORT OR IN AUTHORIZATION ADOPTED BY EIGHTH UNGA, TO SECRETARIAT PURCHASE OF PREFAB UNITS.

ISSAEVITCH ALSO AFFIRMED THAT "MATTER IS IN HAND" AND THAT UNIFIL PREFAB REQUIREMENTS "WILL BE DEALT WITH WITHIN EXISTING APPROPRIATIONS." ISSAEVITCH, WHO SAID HE HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH LANSKY ON THE MATTER, ASSURED USUN THAT UN IS NOT TRYING TO RESUSCITATE ITS PREVIOUS REQUEST TO THE US FOR NON-REIMBURSABLE PROVISION OF PREFAB (REFS B AND C).

4. AS REGARDS LOGISTICS, LANSKY SAID THAT AFTER UPDATED ESTIMATE OF AVAILABLE FUNDS IS RECEIVED IN NEW YORK, UNIFIL WILL BE INSTRUCTED TO ASK ISRAELI FIRM OF TROMASBESTOS IN ACCO (ACRE) HOW MANY MEN WOULD BE NEEDED AND FOR HOW LONG TO INSTALL PREFABS. SIMULTANEOUSLY, UNIFIL WILL BE ASKED TO TOUCH BASE WITH GOL IN VERY LOW KEY RE ACCEPTABILITY OF ISRAELI WORKERS AT NAQOURA.

5. LANSKY FURTHER INDICATED THAT URQUHART IS CONCERNED AT POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS OF ISRAELI WORKERS CROSSING BORDER TO GO TO NAQOURA, PARTICULARLY SINCE THEY WOULD BE THERE AT A TIME OF THE RENEWAL OF THE UNIFIL MANDATE. ACCORDING TO LANSKY, HOWEVER, THERE IS NO VIABLE ALTERNATIVE. UN ENGINEERS CANNOT PUT UP PREFABS AND ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO ISRAELI PURCHASE WOULD BE TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITY IN CYPRUS OR ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE OF ENGAGING CONTRACTOR AND BUYING PREFABS. THIS WOULD BE VERY COSTLY AS WELL AS TIME CONSUMING, AND COULD NOT BE ACCOMPLISHED BEFORE
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BAD WEATHER SETS IN. LANSKY SAID HE WOULD KEEP US INFORMED

6. WHILE UNIFIL HAS RECEIVED AND ERECTED PORTOMOD RELOCATABLE WAREHOUSES PURCHASED BY UN AND AIRLIFTED BY US ON NON-REIMBURSABLE BASIS (REF B AND D), IT (OR UNFOS) EVIDENTLY FAILED TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH PROCUREMENT OF PREFABS FOR OFFICE AND QUARTERS USE WHEN REQUEST FOR US PROVISION OF THESE UNITS ON NON-REIMBURSABLE BASIS (REF C) WAS DENIED (REF B). USUN PROMPTLY NOTIFIED UN (LANSKY) ORALLY OF DENIAL, AND FOLLOWED THIS UP WITH LETTER TO HIS SUPERIOR, ASYG TIMBRELL, JUNE 6TH EXPLAINING USG REASONING. IN ANY CASE, WE UNDERSTAND THAT UNIFIL DOES NOT FIND US MANUFACTURED PREFABS SATISFACTORY FOR THEIR PURPOSES. ONSET OF INCLEMENT WEATHER IN SOUTH LEBANON NOW PRESENTS UN WITH CHOICE BETWEEN ALTERNATIVE OF PURCHASING READILY AVAILABLE, CHEAPER ISRAELI PACKAGE AND FISCALLY DISAGREEABLE, TIME-CONSUMING SEARCH FOR PROCUREMENT FROM SOME OTHER SOURCE. YOUNG

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